

## Cambridge Public Library Policy Regarding Hate Speech

American public libraries support an individual's right to free speech. However, the public library at the heart of a community's civic life, must be a safe and inclusive place for all people to come and to enjoy. The Library embraces, celebrates and reflects our diverse community and country. We strive to create an environment where people from varied backgrounds and experiences can engage with one another respectfully, explore ideas and art, evaluate information, and acquire new skills and knowledge - including learning about human experiences and perspectives which are different from their own.

Therefore, the Cambridge Public Library will not tolerate hate speech directed at patrons or staff. *Hate speech is a communication that carries no meaning other than the expression of hatred for some group, especially in circumstances in which the communication is likely to provoke violence. It is an incitement to hatred primarily against a group of persons defined in terms of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and the like. Hate speech can be any form of expression regarded as offensive to racial, ethnic and religious groups and other discrete minorities or to women.*<sup>1</sup>

Further, the Cambridge Public Library's Behavior Policy specifically prohibits: *Interfering with another person's right to use the Library or with the library staff's performance of their duties*<sup>2</sup> Hate speech directed at a member of the public or staff clearly violates our Behavior Policy. The Behavior Policy states: *that failure to comply with one or more of the library's established policies may result in the suspension of library privileges.*<sup>3</sup>

1. <https://definitions.uslegal.com/h/hate-speech>

2. CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY BEHAVIOR POLICY FOR LIBRARY USERS

3. CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY BEHAVIOR POLICY FOR LIBRARY USERS